

Fr. Satish Joseph  Mar 14 3 min read



"Hope Does not Disappoint: A Reflection on the Coronavirus Pandemic"

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We are in the midst of a global challenge unlike any other in recent times. COVID-19, more popularly known as coronavirus, has shut down travel, borders, schools, sports, places of worship and much more. There are now more than 140,000 confirmed cases and more than 5000 deaths. When, where, and who the virus

may next infect is anybody's guess.

Here we are. We are the human race. But we are also the people of God. We must deal with this pandemic with caution and with faith. In this context, I would like to offer three points for reflection.

1) **We are all connected.** If there is anything that the COVID-19 pandemic is teaching us, it is this – that we are all connected. It is ironic that we must learn that lesson by quarantining ourselves, by prohibiting travel, by cancelling social events. Perhaps, there is not just an irony here, but also a paradox – that it is in our being separated that we understand our connectedness. This is the time to realize that nations cannot act unilaterally, that communities cannot thrive in isolation, and that global solutions to global problems require global cooperation. The virus has not discriminated between wealthy and poor, between races and cultures, between genders and sexual orientations, between immigrants and citizens, even between good and bad. In the end we are all human beings and we are all in it together. Whether it is the virus, global warming, climate change, global economy, or the health of the global population, we will either all thrive together, or we will perish together. I pray that our present isolation is not fruitless! Let our separation from each other help us build a more connected world!

2) **Human Life is fragile.** The second thing that the COVID-19 is making me aware of is how fragile human life and human institutions are. We live in a very technologically and scientifically advanced world. In spite of the wealth of our collective knowledge and wisdom, a tiny, invisible-to-the-eye virus can literally stop us in our tracks. As the death toll continues to rise and the virus continues to spread, it is as if the entire world is at a STOP sign. Perhaps this is a reminder to us of the fragility of human life and our human institutions. Isn't it true that the greatest and most advanced facilities and gadgets, though at the service of

humanity, can guarantee human life only to a certain point? I believe that this global crisis is teaching us to treat life with the sanctity, respect, and honor that it deserves – not just our lives and the ones we love, but all human life.

3) **"Hope does not disappoint."** When crisis stares us in our face, we always face it as people of faith – faith in God and faith in one another. This is the time to remember that God is our origin and God is our destiny. And in remembering our origin and destiny, we discover the ultimate meaning of human life – to give glory to God, our Creator and our Eternity. How often we forget the reason God created us! First and foremost, God created us to be happy. God created us to live with God and with one another in a beautiful, peaceful, safe, and secure world. The coronavirus, as some people are saying, is not God's punishment, or wrath, or judgement. It is a virus and we must deal with it as a people of faith – faith in a God who loves us; and faith in one another, who together can overcome the challenges that the world presents. In this season of Lent, let us not forget that God is closest to us in our suffering, our pain, and our vulnerabilities. The second reading for this weekend is timely in this regard. Paul reminds us that, "hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" (Rom 8:5). The hope God's love places in our hearts is our comfort and our peace. It is this very love and hope that then impels us to care for one another. With hope in a God who loves us, let us approach this global crisis with faith and love!

- Fr. Satish Joseph



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